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## Stem Cell Agency Funds Research Aiming to Heal Skin Ulcers

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**Oakland, CA** – Venous skin ulcers are open sores on the legs that can take weeks, sometimes even years, to heal and that can cause serious complications if not treated. Today the governing Board of the California Institute for Regenerative Medicine (CIRM) invested \$5 million in a project to develop a therapy to accelerate wound healing.

Around 1% of Americans have venous skin ulcers. They are usually caused by insufficient blood flow from the veins of the legs back to the heart. The resulting increased blood pressure and swelling in the legs can cause an open wound to form that is painful and difficult to heal, seriously impacting quality of life. Those most at risk of developing venous leg ulcers are older people, women and non-white populations.

There are no drugs approved by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for this condition and sometimes these ulcers can lead to serious skin and bone infections and, in rare cases, even skin cancer.

Dr. Antoni Ribas and his team at UCLA are testing a gel called LUT017 that stimulates skin stem cells to proliferate and produce more keratinocytes, a kind of cell essential for repairing skin and accelerating wound healing.

"This condition has a disproportionate effect on underserved populations and is common among people with diabetes, obesity and limited movement," said Dr. Ribas, a member of the Eli and Edythe Broad Center of Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at UCLA and director of the Tumor Immunology Program at UCLA's Jonsson Comprehensive Cancer Center. "Venous leg ulcers can cause chronic pain, loss of function and mobility, social isolation and lead to increased time spent in hospitals."

The CLIN1 grant of \$5,005,126 will help them manufacture and test LUT017 in pre-clinical models and apply to the FDA for permission to study it in a clinical trial in people.

Maria T. Millan, CIRM's President and CEO says "This program adds to CIRM's diverse portfolio of regenerative medicine approaches to tackle chronic, debilitating that lead to downstream complications, hospitalization, and a poor quality of life."

### About CIRM

At CIRM, we never forget that we were created by the people of California to accelerate stem cell treatments to patients with unmet medical needs, and act with a sense of urgency to succeed in that mission.

To meet this challenge, our team of highly trained and experienced professionals actively partners with both academia and industry in a hands-on, entrepreneurial environment to fast track the development of today's most promising stem cell technologies.

With \$5.5 billion in funding and more than 150 active stem cell programs in our portfolio, CIRM is the world's largest institution dedicated to helping people by bringing the future of cellular medicine closer to reality.

For more information go to [www.cirm.ca.gov](http://www.cirm.ca.gov)